

# KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY AUGUST 2021 SUMMARY Pandanan and Bugsuk Balabac, Palawan



13

Bilang ng nagawang patrolya



54.9

Kabuuang kilometrong naabot ng patrolya



10.5

Kabuuang oras ng patrolya



Bilang ng illegal na kailangang aksyunan



Bilang ng nai-report sa KFI



Bilang ng naaresto



128

Pinakamataas na bilang sa tulugan ng Katala



78

Bilang ng cavity nesters



12

Bilang ng naitalang namumunga at namumulaklak na puno



3

Nakuhang mga silo o patibong



09675176935



048-434-7693



kficacatua2016@gmail.com



## KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY

### PANDANAN AND BUGSUK ISLANDS, BALABAC

August 2021

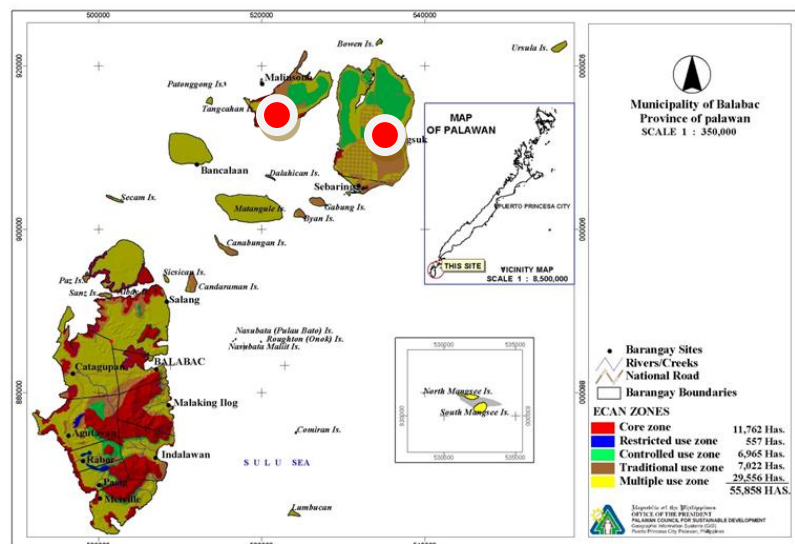
Prepared by:

Rene A. S. Antonio, Peter Widmann and Indira D. L. Widmann

#### I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSERVATION AREA, CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES, CONSERVATION TARGETS AND METHODS

Pandanan and Bugsuk Islands belong to the north-easternmost municipality of Balabac in Palawan (Fig. 1). Coastal forests are dense and stock on flat limestone originating from elevated coral reefs. Large trees in the coastal forest are mostly deciduous and widely spaced due to water stress during the dry season. The understorey is very dense with abundant vines. Emergent trees *Pometia pinnata*, *Dracontomelon dao*, *Koordersiodendron pinnatum*, *Intsia bijuga*, and *Ficus* spp. A narrow rim of beach forest with *Erythrina*, *Calophyllum* and *Barringtonia* is present. The dense coastal forest cover is as well protected because the large portion of the island is privately-owned and entries are monitored by security company guards. Extensive mangroves are thriving which mostly dominated by genus *Sonneratia* and *Rhizophora*. Mangrove forest play important role not only to its wildlife inhabitant but act as one of the main food sources for the critically endangered Philippine Cockatoo. Both islands have old growth *Sonneratia* that can sustain food to significant numbers of wild cockatoo population during its fruiting season.

Currently, 101 bird species have been recorded in Pandanan, Bugsuk and adjacent Malinsuno Island. Among these are six globally threatened and six near-threatened species (IUCN 2019). Of outstanding conservation concern are particularly the larger tree cavity nesters, like Palawan Hornbill, all three parrot species of Palawan, Philippine Cockatoo *Cacatua haematuropygia*, Blue-naped Parrot *Tanygnathus lucionensis* and Blue-headed Racquet-tail *Prioniturus platenae*, and other conservation relevant species like Grey Imperial-pigeons *Ducula pickeringii* and Mantanani Scops-owl *Otus mantananensis* (Widmann et al. 2008). The first and only record for the Philippines of a Fairy Pitta *Pitta nympha* comes from Malinsuno as a result of the conservation project. On the other



**Figure 1.** Location map of Pandanan and Bugsuk Island (red dots) in municipality of Balabac, Palawan (Map: PCSDS).

hand Bugsuk Island also serves as one of the important habitat for the endemic Balabac Mousedeer *Tragulus nigricans*, due to restricted access of locals and less presence of hunting, deer population thriving in significant numbers. Bugsuk Island is apparently the only place in the world where the highly threatened Balabac Mousedeer, Palawan Porcupine, Philippine Cockatoo and Palawan Hornbill co-exist in the same forest habitat in viable populations.

Both island marine ecosystem harbor several threatened marine turtles species and locally declared as marine protected area that remain as the important breeding sites for grouper, wrasses and other high valued marine products.

### Conservation Objectives

1. Maintain the species diversity and function of ecosystems and species at Pandanan and Bugsuk Island.
2. Identify and preserve priority sites for conservation and maintain their ecological functions.
3. Prevent or report to enforcing agencies illegal activities that compromise the integrity of the conservation area.

### Conservation Targets

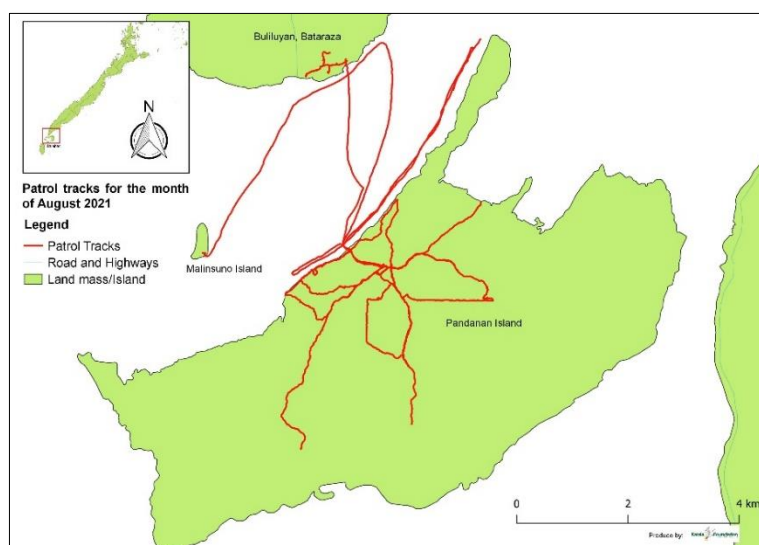
1. To increase Philippine Cockatoo population on Pandanan/Bugsuk by at least 5% from 2018 to 2021.
2. Increase viable population of endangered and endemic target cavity-nesters e.g. Palawan Hornbill, Blue-naped Parrot, Blue-headed Racquet-Tail, among others in Pandanan and Bugsuk Island from 2018-2021.
3. Reduce threats in the area by 50% from 2018-2021.

### Methods

Deputized wardens patrol by foot, by boat and by truck monthly within sites. Patrol members use a technology-based system to register all observations (threats, status and wildlife data) in the android and transferred to a smart application to generate report (Critchlow et al., 2017; Teacher et al., 2013). Species to be monitored are based on their red-list status and their value as bioindicators (IUCN, 2019). Ease of identification in the field was considered as well. The maps are generated and analysed through QGIS. Patrols are coordinated with the concerned barangay, private land owner/company and protected area office wherever it applies.

## II. PATROL TEAM AND EFFORT

A total of 54.9km distance was covered by the team at Pandanan Island as of this month. Monitoring visit was made at Barangay Buliluyan, southern Bataraza on August 26<sup>th</sup> 2021 to verify cockatoo foraging activity, numbers and assessment of possible threats if present.



**Figure 2.** Patrol tracks at Pandanan Island as of August 2021 with coastal patrolling activity and cockatoo foraging site monitoring visit at Barangay Buliluyan, Bataraza (Map: KFI 2021).



### III. PATROL OBSERVATIONS

#### A. Wildlife observations

The following wildlife species was recorded: 26 Indi. of Palawan Hornbill, Blue-naped Parrot (24 indi.), Green imperial Pigeon (23 indi.), Blue-headed Racquet tail (16 indi.), Malayan Night Heron (6 indi.), Great Slaty Woodpecker (5 indi.) Red-bellied Pitta (2 Indi.) and Hill Mynah. Moreover, we also noted this month Osprey, White-bellied Sea-Eagle and a possible new record of Japanese Night Heron in Pandanan.

Records of terrestrial reptiles were represented by the following: Monitor Lizard and Spitting Cobra while for marine species these include Green Sea Turtle and Hawksbill Sea Turtles. For mammals, we regularly record the Long-tailed Macaque, Flying Squirrel (nocturnal), Civet Cat (nocturnal) and Southern Palawan Tree Squirrel.

#### B. Philippine Cockatoo and Palawan Hornbill post-nest monitoring

Post nest occupation monitoring activity were made in all known active cockatoo nest trees in Pandanan Island. Presence of cockatoos were only noted in trees which were occupied late in the breeding season while in majority of the nest trees there was no more activity or post nesting occupation. Cockatoo breeding pairs with the new recruits are known to stay in nest trees for until a month after the young successfully fledges. The last hatchling from this year was checked, and was found healthy, well-fed which successfully fledged second week of the month. In total, 47 banded young cockatoos plus one with no ring successfully fledged as of this year from Pandanan Island while 30 cockatoos (3 banded and 27 with no rings) successfully fledged from Bugsuk Island respectively.

For Palawan Hornbill, 20 successful fledglings were recorded at Pandanan while eight in Bugsuk Island (as of June) respectively.

#### C. Cockatoo roost counts and food providing tree monitoring

A decrease in cockatoo numbers was noted this month at the roost site in Malinsuno Island with only 128 and 51 as the highest and lowest counts respectively. We learned that significant numbers of cockatoos are sighted in Sebaring where fruits of Pagatpat tree *Sonneratia alba* (Fig. 3) are abundant in the area. Sebaring holds significant stands of old growth *Sonneratia alba* trees. Due to bad weather, we were not able to visit Sebaring yet.

Eleven forest trees and one salt tolerant tree species were recorded at fruiting stage and this were represented by the following plants: Aga tree (*Ficus sp.*), Aluyaw tree, Baro tree, Bubog tree (*Sterculia foetida*), Dao tree (*Dracontomelon dao*), Girangan tree, Ipil-ipil tree, Maglabuyo tree, Mangupak tree, Marampuso tree, Moringa plants, Pagatpat tree (*Sonneratia alba*) and Talisay tree (*Terminalia catappa*).



**Figure 3.** Food providing trees: Fruits of Mangupak tree (left) Dao tree (center) and Pagatpat tree (Right, Photos: R.Antonio).

#### D. Community monitoring and threats observation

No transient and visiting locals were documented in Pandanan Island during the monitoring period. Old snare traps were discovered at Liyang-liyang forest and were properly dismantled and removed by the monitoring team; no snared-wildlife in these three snares.



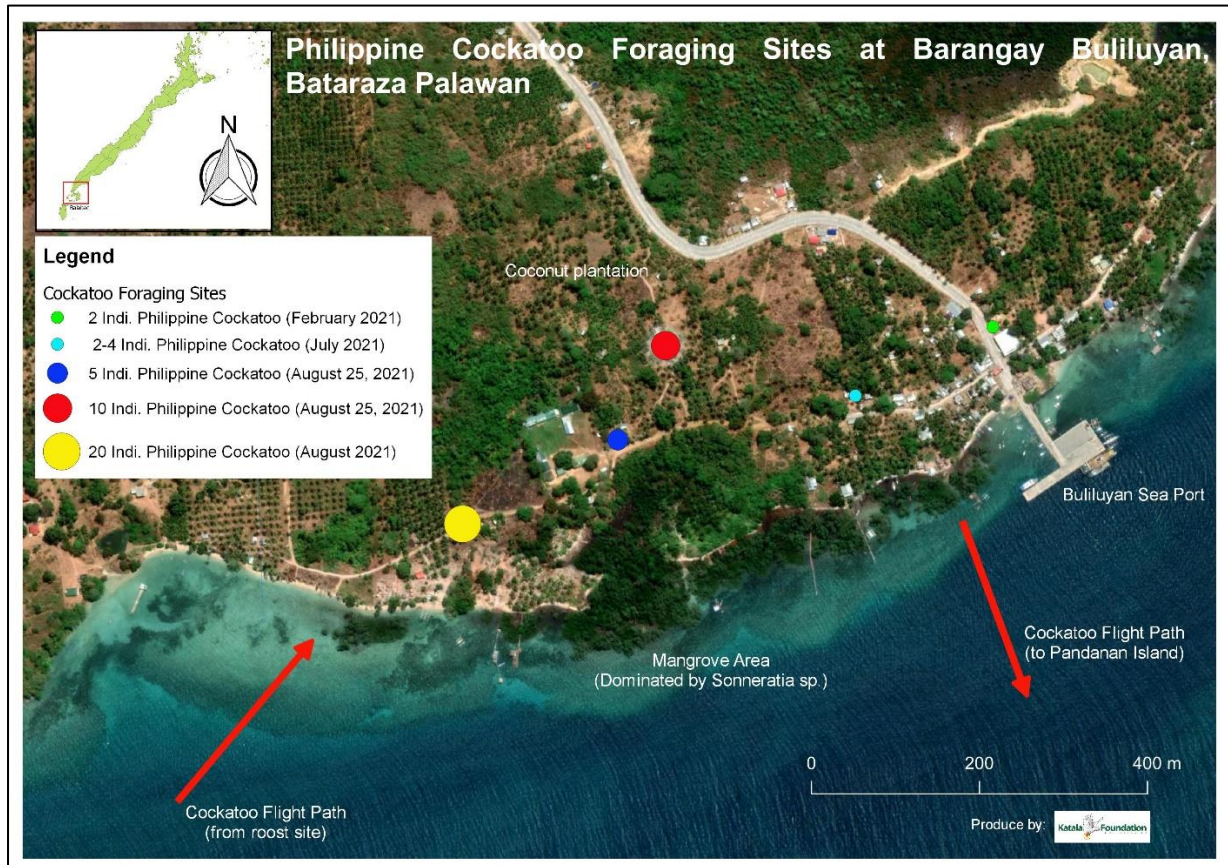
**Figure 4.** Snares that were dismantled by monitoring team( upper left) and some photos of the Buliluyan foraging sites with stands of Malunggay and Ipil-ipil, Photos: R.Antonio).

#### E. Cockatoo foraging site monitoring

Foraging site monitoring was made at Barangay Buliluyan, Bataraza on August 26, 2021. Visitation was coordinated with the barangay chairman. Twenty households were reached of which six have Moringa plants within their backyard. All six households were reportedly visited by cockatoos for their matured pods of Moringa. Total of 36 Moringa plants were counted and all bear young and mature pods. Date of observation of foraging cockatoos was shared by local respondents.



Aside from Moringa, cockatoo flocks were reported by one correspondent foraging at the young and mature pods of Ipil-ipil tree (yellow circle on map, Fig. 4). Feeding on Ipil-ipil are well observed by wardens at Malinsuno Island. There were no direct or indirect threats to cockatoo found in the area during the actual monitoring and further our informal interviews with locals and barangay chairman confirmed that the barangay has regulation not to harm, possess or capture any wildlife particular the Katala. No reported roosting site within the barangay. Follow up monitoring in other areas within this barangay is set in September 2021.



**Figure 5.** Foraging sites of Philippine Cockatoos in Barangay Buliluyan, Bataraza. Flight route from roosting site to foraging and to Pandanan Island are indicated in red arrows (Map: KFI 2021).

#### F. Other related conservation activities

Tree planting continued in Pandanan Island with 239 native forest tree seedlings planted in Dalahican Area as of this month (Fig. 6). Planted trees are: 226 Balangihan trees, 5 Bayoso tree and 8 Se-ar trees. Planted trees are identified as food and nest providing tree for cockatoo, hornbill and other cavity nesting birds. We also planted 20 mature Moringa stems in the vicinity of the wardens station (Fig. 6).

We repaired roofing of our field house in Malinsuno within this reporting period.



**Figure 6.** Tree planting in Dalahican, Pandanan Island and newly planted Balangihan seedlings (upper photos) and the repair of the roofing of our field house on site (Photos: R.Antonio).

#### **IV. ISSUES, CONSTRAINTS AND ACTIONS TAKEN**

Dismantling and removal of snare traps was made by wildlife wardens. Continued monitoring will be made along the areas with reported activities of locals.

#### **V. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Site visitation and monitoring must be made at Sebaring to check cockatoo population in the area and assess local activity and behavior towards the cockatoos. We hope we can establish network in the area to help us monitor the sightings and threats around the area.

A joint monitoring and patrolling by government agencies and KFI is deemed necessary in Pandanan Island, Tangkahan Island and Malinsuno Island.



## VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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